

PROCESSIONAL SINGING BY SURPLICED CHOIRS

AN

UNAUTHORIZED INNOVATION

IN THE

Public Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church;

BEING A PART OF

BISHOP McILVAINE'S ADDRESS

TO THE

CONVENTION OF THE DIOCESE OF OHIO,

JUNE 3, 1868,

TOGETHER WITH THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CANONS ON THE
SAME SUBJECT.

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PROCESSIONAL AND SURPLICED CHOIRS.

[BISHOP MCILVAINE, in his Address to the Convention of the Diocese of Ohio, held in Trinity Church, Newark, June 3d, 1868, after other matters, said, as follows:]

A case has occurred, in a congregation of the Diocese, of what I regard as unlawful innovation on our established worship, by the introduction of a ceremonial which has never appeared in this Diocese before. It seemed my duty to address to the Rector, and through him to the Vestry, a communication on the subject, containing my views of the matter, under the laws and usages of our Church. I am happy and thankful to say that, so far as I know, it is the first instance in this Diocese of any addition to the appointed and customary order of our Morning and Evening Prayer which has seemed to need any interference on my part. But in the present remarkable fondness of a class of minds in our General Church for ritualistic novelties, there is no knowing what a seed of this sort, unheeded, may speedily grow to. I think it well, therefore, to state to this Convention, and through it to the whole Diocese, the ground I have taken, and my reasons therefor, premising, however, that, as I have no desire to draw attention to the particular parish referred to, I shall treat the subject in as much abstraction therefrom as possible. Indeed, I should have preferred to avoid even this very general reference, had it not been necessary as a reason for introducing to the Convention what I am going to say; and I wish very emphatically to forbid, at the outset, the thought that, in any portion of what I shall say, any reflection is intended upon the motives or intentions of those most nearly concerned in originating the case referred to. It is not to arraign them before the Convention that I speak of it. What may be very innocent on the part of those who institute it, may be very injurious and quite unlawful in itself or its consequences.

What I am going to read is simply an enlargement of the views contained in the paper sent to the Rector. Having obtained from him an admission of the correctness of the information on which I proceeded, the statement of the practice is as follows: At the opening of Morning and Evening Prayer, a procession, consisting of some fifteen boys and some men, all vested in surplices, is formed, which, entering the Church at the front door, proceeds, singing as it advances, up the middle aisle, until it reaches the seats or stalls (so called) before the chancel, where the members of the procession find their appointed seats—the congregation being expected to stand until those choristers are seated, when the Rector begins the Sentences at the commencement of the Morning or

Evening Prayer, as the case may be. This practice has been continued, I believe, some months in the parish referred to. It presents itself to my notice under three aspects:

First.—*The PROCESSION.*

Secondly.—*The procession entering the Church and proceeding up the aisle WITH SINGING.*

Thirdly.—*The members of the procession vested in SURPLICES.*

I take these in the order given.

1. *The procession.* If this were unconnected with the singing and the surplice, a mere device for better order, the choristers silently entering together for the prevention of such confusion as might attend their coming in at different times, there would be no exception taken. But such is not the character of the procession. I pass, therefore, to the second particular noted.

2. *The procession, WITH SINGING.* I do not inquire whether any thing is sung besides the Psalms and Hymns set forth in the Prayer Book, and which, according to the Rubric prefixed to the Psalms in Metre, “*are allowed to be sung before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, at the discretion of the Minister.*” Were such the case, the ground of objection to the whole proceeding as unlawful would be much strengthened. But I will take it for granted, and have since learned, that nothing else is used in that processional singing. Now, that practice must be regarded as intended either as an act of *worship*, or as one of *mere musical ceremony for display or entertainment*. Shall we suppose the latter? I am unwilling to impute a want of reverence and propriety which, until better informed, I cannot believe. Then we must take the other supposition (which I have been informed is correct), that it is an act of *worship*. It is thus *public worship*, and I learn is so understood; the congregation being expected to rise at the entrance of the procession, to stand till the singing is terminated, and to take part therein. But the Rubric says the morning and evening worship of the congregation shall begin in quite another mode: “*The Minister (it says) shall begin the morning (or Evening) Prayer (as the case may be) by reading one or more of the following Sentences.*” There is no credible meaning in this but that when the congregation have assembled for the regular appointed public worship of the morning and evening, the first opening of such worship shall be such reading, and before *that beginning* no act of common worship shall be introduced. To this, in the English Prayer Book there is no exception. Hence, in the valuable and learned “*Notes, Legal and Historical, on the Book of Common Prayer, by Archibald John Stephens, Barrister at Law,*” published by the Ecclesiastical History Society, we read under the above Rubric: “*It is clear, from this Rubric, that the Sentences must begin the Morning Prayer, and that they can not be preceded by any other words.*” And in the recent work of the Rev. R. P. Blakeney, LL.D., on the Book of Common Prayer, “*in its History and Interpretation, with special reference to existing controversies,*” we read, under the same Rubric, that “*the practice of commencing service with a procession and chanting is unauthorized.* The Rubric is express. To begin the service *processionally*

is unlawful. It is true that Queen Elizabeth legalized the singing of a hymn at the opening and closing of the services, *but she expressly forbade processions.*"

What Queen Elizabeth legalized, though not now lawful, so far as I am informed, in the Church of England, is lawful in our Church. In our Prayer Book one exception is provided to the general rule of beginning the service with the Sentences. In the Rubric prefixed to the Metrical Psalms, permission is given to introduce an act of public worship before such reading. But it is confined to the singing of *one of the Psalms in Metre, or one of the Hymns, as set forth in the Prayer Book*, "at the discretion of the Minister;" that is, it is left to the Minister to say whether the service shall begin in that way or not; and if it does, to select whether it shall be in the singing of a Psalm or a Hymn, as set forth in the Prayer Book. This being the only exception provided to the general rule of beginning our Morning and Evening Prayer with the reading of one or more of the Sentences, it follows that any other beginning is unlawful.

But I am assured that in the practice under consideration nothing else than one of those Metrical Psalms or Hymns is sung. Where, then, is the fault? Let it be marked that the Rubric authorizing either a Psalm or Hymn says, "allowed to be sung in all the congregations of the said Church before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, and also before and after sermons." From these words it is evident that the sort and mode of singing thus provided for are just what are usual *in the congregation*, and *by the congregation, after Morning Prayer and before and after sermons*—the usual congregational singing by the people, in their usual places, and their usual way of participating in that species of worship.

Now, it is vain to argue that a Hymn or Psalm, sung by some fifteen or twenty persons as they march the length of the Church, though the whole congregation unite with them, is the mode of worship contemplated in the Rubric. What if the congregation, as may sometimes be the case, be composed in the major part of that procession? Certainly it is not the grave, composed, orderly, undistracted worship provided for in the Rubric. It was unknown to our church when the Rubric was made. It is something intended to derive excitement from the spectacle and ceremonial of that procession, and not merely from the union of the musical expression with devotional thought. Such processional singing was common in the Church of England before the Reformation, under the reign of Popery. It is in perfect keeping with the whole peculiar character of a system which lays the stress of its religion and power so much upon the excitements of a pompous ceremonial. Such processions are appointed in the *Rituale Romanum*. They were abolished in the Church of England, whether they took place outside or within the place of worship, by the Royal Injunction in 1547, and the prohibition was renewed in 1559, and one of the reasons given was, that the people "*may the more quietly hear that which is said or sung to their edifying.*" The only exception to this

was what was called "the annual perambulation of the parish;" and Archbishop Grindal, in carrying out the Injunction, directed that in that excepted case, in which nothing was to be done within the Church, all the ceremony should consist of the Minister saying certain parts of Scripture and certain prayers, with the reading of a homily, but with the express provision that the procession should be "*without wearing any surplices, carrying of banners, . . . or such like Popish ceremonies.*"—*Grindal's Remains*, p. 141, P. S.

The revival of processional singing in these days, has arisen entirely out of that discontentment with the old ways of our Liturgical and Protestant worship, as established in the laws and usages of all the centuries since the Reformation, and out of that morbid coveting of increased ceremonial, of which the extreme Ritualism of these days, in England and in certain places this side the sea, is the notorious manifestation. Such an innovation upon the established order of our worship, such a disturbance, I may better say, could not have been anticipated by the framers of our American Prayer Book. But a few years ago, before the ritualistic atmosphere reached its present temperature, no Episcopal clergyman would have ventured to counsel its introduction. If such processional singing be lawful before the Morning Prayer, it is just as lawful after it and before the sermon, or whenever a psalm or hymn is sung in the congregation. If, on the other hand, it would be unlawful before the sermon, it is unlawful before the service.

3. *The procession IN SURPLICES.* In Canon 3, Title I., § 2, on Candidates for Orders officiating as Lay Readers, it is enacted that a candidate, licensed by the Bishop to officiate as lay reader, "*shall not assume the dress appropriate to clergymen ministering in the congregation.*" From this it appears that there is a dress recognized in our laws as "*appropriate to clergymen ministering in the congregation;*" which means, of course, a dress *distinctive* of the office of clergymen, so officiating. And it appears also that laymen, though Candidates for Orders, and officiating in the service under the Bishop's license, are forbidden the use of such dress, *on the ground* that, being the distinctive dress of clergymen, it is not appropriate to laymen. In Canon X. of this Diocese, on the subject of Lay Readers, it is required that, before any one shall be authorized to officiate as a lay reader, he shall be licensed by the Bishop, and shall in all cases comply with the requisition of the Canon of the General Convention, just quoted, as to not wearing the dress appropriate to clergymen.

Thus it appears, that, though a layman be a Candidate for Orders, and perhaps within a week of becoming a clergyman, and though he has received the license of the Bishop to conduct the service of the Church, he must not put on the surplice (for that, of course, is the dress referred to), and for the single reason that, being not a clergyman, that dress is not proper for him.

The history of the Canon of the General Convention makes the prohibition still more impressive. The first legislation on the subject was in the General Convention of 1804. The Canon, then enacted, left it to the Bishop to confine the Candidate for Orders,

officiating as a lay reader, "*to such dress and such stations in the Church as are appropriate only to lay readers.*" Non-conformity on the part of the candidate was made "in all cases a *disqualification* for Orders." In 1808 we find the Canon amended. Instead of leaving the dress and stations in the Church to the prescription of the Bishops of the several Dioceses, thus giving room for a diversity of practice, the Canon was altered to read: "He shall not use the dress nor the stations *which are appropriate to clergymen.*" Before, you will observe, the words were: "It shall be the duty of the Bishop to confine every such candidate to such dress and such stations *as are appropriate only to lay readers.*" But that was felt to be too indeterminate; for what *was* "the dress appropriate only to lay readers?" The amendment expressed the intention more precisely. Taking the matter out of the hands of the several Bishops, and prescribing a law for all the Dioceses alike, it said, "*he shall not use the dress nor the stations which are appropriate to clergymen ministering in the congregation.*" The disqualification for Orders, in case of non-compliance, was continued.

Dr. Hawks, in his work on the Canon Law of our Church, says: "The object of the amendment, in making the prohibition of general application, was *uniformity*; and it was the result of a case of a candidate having officiated in the surplice and gown at the suggestion of a member of the Standing Committee of his Diocese, who, before signing his testimonials for Orders, was desirous of ascertaining his ability in conducting the Church service, he (the candidate) having been a Unitarian Minister."

In 1822, we find the severe penalty of non-compliance omitted, but the prohibition continued as before; and so it has continued to this time. Thus is illustrated the more clearly the ground of the prohibition, namely, that the surplice, being a distinctive dress of the officiating clergy, is in no case proper for laymen, even though they be licensed to conduct the public worship of the congregation. What, then, shall be said of the propriety of a company of boys and men, whose only distinction from the rest of the congregation is, that they lead the singing of the congregation, being arrayed in the dress pronounced in our laws to be so the appropriate dress of clergymen ministering in the congregation, that for any licensed lay reader to assume it would be considered a palpable impropriety and illegality, and for many years of our legislation would have disqualified a Candidate for Orders from being received to the ministry? Has a layman, merely because, under the Rector's sanction, he leads in the singing, a privilege in that respect which is forbidden to one who leads in the whole worship, under the license of the Bishop? What makes the clergyman's dress appropriate to a singing boy, while it is inappropriate to any man or woman of the congregation who takes part in the singing? If it be that the boy is appointed to a particular function in that part of the worship, why not then a surpliced organist, and why not surpliced church wardens, especially when ministering in the congregation, as receivers of the alms and oblations of the communicants?

But here let it be *supposed* that, with regard to this lay use of the

dress appropriate to clergymen, as well as to the processional singing of those so vested, there is no written prohibition, direct or implied. It does not follow that either of them is lawful in our American Episcopal Church. The position that *whatever is not expressly prohibited is lawful*—a position taken by some who, in these days are thirsting after the introduction of Ritualistic novelties into our public worship—is wholly untenable, and, in its consistent application and results, would be destructive of all order and uniformity in a church, of which one of the most cherished excellencies is, that her prayer is Common Prayer—common not only to all that attend in the same house of worship, but to all the church, wherever the people worship; so that every one of them shall be at home in the worship of every congregation he may happen to meet with—no novelties to disturb his peace of mind when he enters the house of God, and dislocate his cherished conformity to the order of divine worship as he has learned it from the Prayer Book.

In answer to that precise claim, that whatever is not prohibited is lawful, applied, by English Ritualists of the present extravagant sort, to practices in use before the Reformation and not since formally prohibited, the Address to the Clergy of their respective Dioceses, drawn up in 1851, and signed by twenty-four Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England, says: “We believe that at the Reformation, the English Church not only rejected certain corruptions, but intended to establish one uniform ritual, according to which her public services should be conducted. But it is manifest that a license, such as is contended for, is wholly incompatible with any uniformity whatsoever, and at variance with the universal practice of the Catholic Church, which has never given to the officiating ministers of separate congregations any such large discretion in the selection of ritual observances.” These words are as true in principle for our Church as for that of England.

The present Bishop of Exeter, venerable in his extreme old age, and one whose general relation to the controversies of these times gives special weight to his views on such a question, in delivering his mind, in the way of rebuke to a clergyman for placing the image of the cross on the communion table, pronounced the same principle, with more amplification: “Would it be lawful,” he said, “for any persons whomsoever to deck the Lord’s table, in preparation for the Holy Communion, with vases containing flowers, and with a cross placed on the table? *Certainly not*, unless there be an express or implied direction so to do. The very nature of the case—the general requisition of uniformity—alike leads to the same conclusion, that it is not lawful for any person *whomsoever to introduce novel ornament at his own discretion*. In truth, where would the claim of such discretion end? If one person may at his pleasure decorate the Lord’s table with a cross, another may equally claim to set a crucifix upon it, whilst a third may think it necessary to erect some symbol of Puritan doctrine or feeling, to mark his reprobation of his Romanizing neighbors.”

The principle thus expressed, that it is not lawful for any person whomsoever to introduce novel *ornaments* at his own discretion, is

equally applicable to novel *ceremonies*, and applies as well to a surpliced processional introduction to our Morning Prayer in the American Church, as to a cross on the communion table in the Church of England. But there is *law in long established and unvaried usage*, which demands compliance, and *that law* forbids these novelties in our Church.

Since the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country until the last very few years, processional singing in our congregations was never heard of. It is still so very infrequent, that to pretend that it makes any thing that may be called a *usage* of the Church, so as to limit in any degree the law of usage derived from the universal mode of our worship for more than seventy years preceding it, is out of the question. The same is true of the usage of the Church of England. No such thing takes place in the Cathedral service, or that of the University Chapels. Ever since the year 1830, I have, during various visits to England, attended the service of many English Cathedrals and of the chief University Chapels, and not only did I never witness processional singing therein, but I have no knowledge, to this day, that it obtains in any of them. As to parish churches, there is no doubt that it has obtained a place in a few—so few, however, that to call it a *usage* is simply preposterous; and what there is of it has come in within a very few years, and as the offspring of precisely that school of Tractarian Ritualism which has been so long desiring to draw nearer the Church of Rome in these things, and of late has ventured to appear in so many other offensive conformities to her sacerdotal ceremonial.

Besides processional singing, the wearing of the surplice by any but Clergymen is equally a novel innovation on the usages of our American Church. It is so also in the Parish Churches of England, except the very few into which a contrary practice has of late been introduced, under the same craving for what is called a higher ceremonial, that has given birth to processional singing. I am well aware that choristers in Cathedrals and in some University Chapels are vested in surplices: by what authority I do not know. But the fact that, until within a few years of growing Ritualism, the practice was confined to such places, and was kept out of the Parish Churches, shows how little the usage, if it may be so called, is applicable to our Churches. It is a very new novelty among us, and as yet has very little following, whatever it may seek and hope for, and however we may have reason to fear it will be extended unless timely measures be taken to check its growth. The contrary usage is too universal and too long established to be in the least affected in point of authority by any practice so infantile in age and so limited in extent, and is a *law* in our Church, if ever there was a usage which deserved that name. It is pertinent here to call to mind that the Declaration signed by twenty-eight of our Bishops, and moved in the meeting of the House of Bishops assembled in New York in October, 1866—a declaration occasioned by the alarming efforts of extreme Ritualism, and in which, referring to the idea that we in this Church are subject in any degree to the laws or

usages of the Church of England, it was emphatically declared that our Church was duly organized as "a particular and National Church,"—in that paper, I say, it was declared that because it is thus a National Church, "no laws of the Church of England have any force of law in this Church, such as can be justly cited in defense of any departure from the express law of this Church, its liturgy, its discipline, rites, and *usages*;" and further, that "no strange or foreign usages should be introduced or sanctioned by the private judgment of any member or members of this Church, clerical or lay;" and furthermore, that in the censures of that Declaration it was the intention of the signers "to include all departures from the laws, rubrics, and *settled order of this Church*." That a surpliced processional singing at the opening of Morning Prayer is a departure from "the *settled order* of this Church," it is impossible to deny, unless some other meaning be found to the words "*settled order*" than is known to us.

This is no matter of mere technical importance. Our people have been trained and habituated, in the venerable usages of their Church, to a certain uniform, well regulated, dignified, grave and solemn method of commencing the public worship of God, as well as to seeing the garment appropriated to the Clergy when ministering in the congregation, confined to the Clergy; and they are offended, and reasonably offended, in their most sacred associations, and painfully disturbed in their most solemn devotions, by witnessing the novelties of which we have been speaking.

The Address of the twenty-four Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England, to which I have before referred, lays down certain principles which, in their view, should limit changes in ritual matters not otherwise regulated. One is, that "any change which suggests the fear of still further alterations, is most injurious." The principle is wise, whencesoever it come. *That* particular change of which we have been speaking, comes under its application. It does decidedly prepare the way for further changes, as is evidenced in the particular case before us, which began with processional singing at the *opening* of divine service. In a very short time it has grown to processional singing at the *termination* of divine service. It began with the request to the congregation to rise as the procession enters, and continue standing till it reaches the chancel. It has now the additional expectation that the congregation will stand till the procession, in its going out, singing as it goes, shall have reached the door. Well, a plain old-fashioned Episcopalian may reasonably ask, What next? If so much already, how much more? If individual discretion has made such a breach already in the defensive usages and order of our worship, what is to hinder its going a great deal further among us in this Diocese, just as we know such beginnings have increased in some other dioceses of our American Church, and in certain parts of the Church of England, bringing in that whole retinue of ritualistic restoration of Romish superstitions, which have so deformed and dishonored the worship of our Church, that in certain places our venerable Liturgy can hardly be recognized in the foppish masquerade with which it is accompanied?

In the Report of a Committee of the Archbishopal Province of Canterbury, on Ritualism, in 1866, the principle is laid down, as true for us as for them, that "every congregation of Christ's flock, being in itself a member of the general congregation, is bound to consider not only what may be most edifying to itself, but what may be most conducive to the peace and influence of the whole National Church." We are not Congregationalists. It is not, even in things left in a measure unregulated, the right of any one congregation to consider exclusively what will please itself. The feelings and usages and habits of their brethren in the whole communion have a right to be considered, before any serious innovation is made in the mode of their common worship.

In this connection I may say, without hesitation, that the novelty in question is offensive to hundreds of our people, where it may be pleasing to one. It seriously dishonors our Church as one of order, of law, of uniformity, of gravity, of simplicity; a Church protected in her worship, as we have been accustomed to boast, against the individual caprice, or taste, or whim, or fancy, or infirmity of the particular Minister, or any leading influence in the congregation. It hedges up the way of our progress where we want to obtain the confidence of the people in order to draw them to our Ministry. It plants suspicions, prejudices, distrust, aversion, which it will take many years of better doing to eradicate, but of which we have no reason to complain while such innovations of individual discretion shall have place.

Do not think, my brethren, that I am making too much of this matter in thus enlarging upon it. There is wisdom in taking such things at the beginning. An opening in the sea-dyke, which at first might be stopped with a man's finger, by delay lets in the flood. How much easier would it have been to restrain the evils which are now causing such apprehensions in the Church of England, had the day of apparently "*small things*" been more respected. In the year 1846—when the present growth of the doctrine of a sacrificial, propitiatory offering in the Lord's Supper, and of a sacrificial, propitiatory Priesthood in the Christian Ministry, and of a sacrificial altar for its ministrations, with its zealous substitution of an altar for the communion table, as well in fact as in word, was yet comparatively in the bud—I saw what was coming (and it required no prophetic eye to see it), and I took ground against that Romanizing, as in other ways, so especially in the declaration that I would not consecrate a Church having an *altar-form* structure for the Lord's Supper, instead of a communion table, properly so-called. It was intended as my standing protest against the whole Romanistic claim of sacrifice, priest and altar, which since has come in like a flood. I have borne much ridicule for my so-called weakness and folly. I have persevered, and am satisfied with the vindication which the present ritualistic revival, the whole of which centers around and is *for* the stronger establishment of that very claim, is continually furnishing. And it is worth noting, that precisely where was erected that altar-form instead of a table, which gave occasion to that declaration, has appeared the innovation which

gives occasion to the present remarks. There was a *doctrine* involved in that substitution of form ; and there is a doctrine involved in this *surpliced* ceremonial ; though I have no thought of imputing any *doctrinal* connection in either instance to the intentions of those who instituted it. And it is that *doctrinal* connection which makes me the more earnest in the present matter ; and exactly the *same* doctrine is involved as in that former instance of the substitution of the form of an altar for that of a table. Allow me to explain :

Suppose the practice of vesting choristers in surplices should become common in our parishes—and if one may do it, all may—then, of course, the distinctiveness of that garment, as appropriated to the clergy in their ministrations, is gone. It no more designates the clergyman than the layman. But can you suppose that those clergymen in this country, or in England, who make the office of the Christian minister, in its distinctive character, to be that of a sacrificial priest, serving in actual propitiatory sacrifice as a mediator between the sinner and his judge, and who, therefore, regard their office as one of such mysterious sacredness and spiritual power, that between it and the congregation for whom they offer there is a wide and solemn separation, to indicate which they covet the symbolism of separating bars and gates—do you suppose that they will be satisfied with no vestment distinctive of their office, any more than they are satisfied without a holy place and a holy altar distinctive of their office ? Do you suppose they will not be aspiring after a priestly robe, as well as a priestly ritual ? Will they be long content that they who offer the sacrifice shall be vested no more in accordance with their awful dignity than the boy that sings outside the rail of the holy place ? Of course not. The surplice is good enough for ministers who deny that they are sacrificing priests, to whose ministrations the communication of the body and blood of Christ with all-saving grace to sinners is restricted. It is good enough, with some additional garb at times, even for themselves, in the reading of prayers and the preaching of the pulpit ; but a garment distinctive of their ministration *as priests* (which the surplice is not) they must have, and they will get, by adopting the garment of that priesthood which in other things they are so fond of imitating.

Now, is all this mere predictive theory ? No. It is simply the recital of what has taken place already, and of what has already been, in print, foreshadowed in this country. The report of the Royal Commission on Ritual, appointed by the Crown to investigate the practices and doctrines of the English Ritual, brings out strongly what I wish you to notice. One of the clergymen examined was asked : “ Do you consider yourself a sacrificing priest ? ” “ Yes, distinctly so.” “ Then you think you offer a propitiatory sacrifice ? ” “ Yes, I think I do offer a propitiatory sacrifice ”—p. 72. “ Do you use the surplice ? ” “ We use the surplice always in the matins and even song, and at all times *except during the Holy Communion*. At the Holy Communion we use *the vestments*.” “ Will you describe them ? ” “ The chasuble, dalmatic and tunicle.” “ Do you use those vestments at any other time ? ” “ No, we never use

them except at that time"—p. 70. "Is there any mysterious signification in the *chasuble* or in wearing it?" "I think there is a *doctrine* involved in the using of it." "What is that doctrine?" "*The doctrine of the sacrifice.*"—p. 72. To another of these clergymen: "Is the surplice ever used beneath?" "*Not at celebration.*" Let it be marked that when these men speak of "*vestments*," in the Ritual sense, they do not include the surplice. There is nothing distinctive, in that, of their sacrificial priesthood, as appears in the answer to the following question: "What doctrine or meaning do you attach to the vestments?" Answer—"The vestments I take to mean a distinctive dress for the priest at the time of celebrating the Holy Communion." Question—"What doctrine do they imply?" "I should certainly think the use of the chasuble would imply the belief in the *doctrine of sacrifice*—*Eucharistic sacrifice*—*that being the object of a distinctive dress.*" "Will you explain what you mean by that, for I do not quite understand how you connect that with the sacrifice?" Answer—"It has been thought that the priest offering this sacrifice at the Holy Communion should have a distinctive dress to mark him off from the rest of the ministers as being the principal priest in office, offering the sacrifice at the time."

And all this from so-called Protestant ministers!! Alas! alas! But you see the process. First, the taking away from the surplice all distinctiveness as a vestment indicating the clergyman's peculiar function; then, the necessity felt of having some distinctive vestment; next, inasmuch as in their view the peculiarity of the function is the offering of sacrifice, comes the adoption of that *very vestment* which in the Church of Rome is the priest's distinctively symbolical robe when he officiates in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

I think, brethren, I need not say any more to show that the question whether the surplice among us shall lose its distinctive appropriateness to our ministry, by being made as well the garment for the chorister as of the officiating clergyman, has an important doctrinal importance which may conciliate your forgiveness for my having so long occupied your attention with this subject.

Ah! brethren, these are not times for sudden changes of raiment, any more than for other changes in the externalism of our Church. There is an epidemic abroad. Our 34th Article says that "every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish Ceremonies or Rites of the Church, ordained only on man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying." Let us be content to leave all such changes in such hands. Individual choice or preference has no authority here. The more the spirit of innovation upon the ritual of our Church shall increase, the more let us hold fast to what we have so much loved and that has served us so well in the past. We have Rites and Ceremonies in our Church as bequeathed to us from our fathers and decreed to us by their enactments. We want no more. Especially do we want none out of the list of those rejected by our martyred Reformers in the great Protestant Reformation. Let the clergy and the laity see to it that by any but Church authority we get no more.

And now I have finished what I have felt it my duty to say on this subject. I think you will bear me witness, that I have avoided entirely all reflection upon the spirit and intentions and motives of those our brethren whose practice has given occasion to its introduction.

And now there is another matter for a few words. I think that while I was showing that the only lawful beginning of our public worship is by the reading of one or more of the sentences, except we choose to precede them by a Psalm or Hymn, taken from those set forth in the Prayer Book, it must have occurred to some to say to themselves—how, then, can the practice, (I am sorry to say, so common in some parts,) of the choir singing something, very often we know not what, before the minister begins with the reading of the sentences, be justified? I believe it cannot be justified in the face of the laws of our Church or its usages, and I exceedingly wish it were everywhere abandoned, as very unedifying, often very annoying, and always out of order.

I ask you to consider: It is to be regarded either as an act of worship, or as a mere matter of musical entertainment and display. If we say it is intended for worship, then of course it is intended for the worship of the whole congregation. But the Rubrics require that that worship shall begin with the Sentences, or else with a Psalm or Hymn out of the Prayer Book, “at the discretion of the minister,” and *not of the choir*; and that Psalm or Hymn to be so given out in the usual way, that the congregation may unite in it in the usual way. Now, we all know that the singing in question, instead of that, is never of one of these metrical Psalms or Hymns, whatever else it may be. Then, as a matter of worship, it is at once ruled out.

But I think that most generally it is regarded, neither by the choir or the congregation, as an act of worship. What is it, then? Why, at best, it is generally regarded as a mere matter of orchestral exhibition and musical entertainment; the words sung being chosen without reference to any supervising authority of the minister, often wholly unknown to the congregation, and undistinguishable by the most attentive listener. Now, I simply ask, is that a fit prelude to our public worship? If the minister is not allowed to introduce any act of worship before the Sentences, except it be in the singing of one of the authorized metrical Psalms or Hymns, no matter how devotional his selection might be, how is it that you can justify a choir in introducing at that very time whatever they may choose, and that not for *worship*, but for mere musical exhibition or entertainment? It seems to me that it needs but a moment's consideration in this light to see that it cannot be justified, either by the laws of our Church, or consistently with the dignity, gravity or security of our public worship. It will be a good deliverance when it shall be entirely excluded, no matter how good the music could the congregation unite in it, or appropriate the words, supposing *they* could be distinguished. What performance of a choir, before the minister begins the Morning Prayer, is comparable to

the silence of the congregation as devout minds, endeavor to collect their thoughts and wait the voice of the minister, saying: "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."—"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer." I earnestly wish we never had any other beginning.

[The above portion of Bishop McIlvaine's Address was referred to the Committee on Canons, who subsequently presented the following report, which was unanimously adopted:]

REPORT.

The Committee on Canons, to whom was referred the following resolution:

Resolved, That so much of the Bishop's Address as relates to Deviations from the usages and order of our Worship in this Diocese be referred to the Committee on Canons, to consider whether any Canon or resolution on such subject is desirable—

Beg leave respectfully to report: The committee believe that the general and almost universal sentiment of both clergy and laity of this Diocese is against the introduction of novelties of any kind into the solemn Services of our Church. No individual has any right to substitute his own taste or caprice in the place of our Rubrics, Canons, and long-established Usages; and, undoubtedly, if such an attempt were deliberately made, the offender should be proceeded with according to law; and if the law, as it now stands, is not adequate to the emergency, a new Canon should be provided, expressly to meet such cases. We do not, however, believe that any violation of law has been intended, thus far, in what has occurred in the Diocese; but the object in introducing the novelties referred to by the Bishop was, mainly, to make the services of the Church more attractive than they are under our usual forms. This, in our judgment, is wholly inadmissible. Believing that the public sentiment of the Diocese will hereafter be respected in this matter, by every Church within its limits, we deem no further action necessary at present.

All which is respectfully submitted.

ERASTUS BURR,
SAMUEL CLEMENTS,
JOHN W. ANDREWS,
T. C. JONES,
Committee on Canons.

A true copy from the Journal of Convention:

W. C. FRENCH, *Secretary.*



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